

A SURVEY OF FRESHWATER FISH FAUNA IN THE UPPER RIVERS OF CROCKER RANGE NATIONAL PARK SABAH, MALAYSIA

Khairul Adha A. Rahim, Shabdin Mohd Long and Fatimah Abang¹

ABSTRACT

The fish fauna distribution in six rivers in the Crocker Range National Park was examined. All the six rivers surveyed were generally shallow, fast flowing with clear water and rocky and sandy substrate. At the time of survey, all rivers gave excellent water quality data. A total of 17 fish species belonging to four families were sampled. The gastromyzontids represented the major species in all the rivers surveyed, comprising 59.5% of the total number of fish caught. Commercially valuable fish such as the Tor species was also found in the rivers studied.

INTRODUCTION

Sabah made up about one-tenth of Borneo's total land area, but more than one third of the freshwater fishes known from Borneo were also known to occur in Sabah (Nyanti 1995). The initial faunal survey carried out by Leon Vaillant (1983) and Weber and de Beaufort (1913-1922) resulted in the documentation of the majority of fish species found in Sabah. However, the most comprehensive survey of fish fauna in Sabah was undertaken by Inger and Chin in 1962. Their work included some of the secondary freshwater fish species as well as exotics. Other studies in Sabah included those of Maliau Basin (Marsh 1989), Tabin Wildlife Reserve (Taylor 1989), Kinabalu Park (Abdullah 1990), Tawau Hills Park (Nyanti et al. 1995) and Sayap-Kinabalu Park (Nyanti 1995). From these studies, more than 340 species of primary freshwater fish had been reported to occur in Borneo.

Although many surveys had been done on the Sabah freshwater fishes, none of these was carried out in the Crocker Range National Park, Sabah. Information on the number of fish species found in the upper river system of the Crocker Range National Park (CRNP) Sabah was scanty. More studies were required to provide detailed and specific information on the ecology, habitat utilisation and preference, the distribution and abundance of freshwater fish.

The Crocker Range National Park (139,919ha) in Sabah, Malaysia, stretched from south of Kundasang in the north, to Tenom in the south, approximately between latitudes 5° and 6° N and longitudes 115° and 119° E. To the east, the CRNP was bordered by the flood plain of the Pegalan/Padas river and to the west by the coastal plain of the west coast of Sabah. Results presented in this paper were obtained during the Crocker Range Expedition conducted in October 1999.